United Nations E/2009/NGO/28

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
3 June 2009

Original: English

Substantive session of 2009
Geneva, 6-31 July 2009
Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health

Statement submitted by National Federation of International Immigrant Women Associations, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2009/100.

09-35868 (E) 240609

Please recycle

Statement*

National Federation of International Immigrant Women Associations (RIFFI) addresses itself to women irrespective of their nationality and political and religious background. The Federation, founded in 1974, has, over the years, helped break the isolation that a great number of immigrant women experience by supporting and guiding them to education and awareness in such matters as civil rights and social responsibilities, thus increasing their chances of integration into the Swedish society.

RIFFI has run a large number of projects meant to improve the life quality of its members. The projects are connected to health issues; counselling for abused and battered women; the strengthening of the members self-confidence; their search for identity; empowerment; breaking the patriarchal family system.

Funded by the Swedish Consumer Board, RIFFI has focused on the issue of the immigrant women as a particularly vulnerable group in society. Failure to adapt to a new way of life can lead to depression and overweight that can cause serious health problems. The members have been guided towards a sounder life style and a realistic way to find out the most suitable methods for each individual. Consequently, the campaign has given results: the target groups has reconsidered their and their children's food consumption through diminishing the amount of fat, sugar and soft drinks.

The National Swedish Board of Health and Welfare has granted RIFFI considerable funding for the prevention of HIV/AIDS. The aim of the multiple projects has been to increase the level of knowledge and information about the disease as well as to prevent it. Other aims have been to train and educate multicultural health informers with a view of forming a network focusing especially on the young people.

The final reports have shown positive signs, as indicated by the number of participants, ethnic groups and the range of activities.

Since 1994, in our local branch in Stockholm, a psychotherapist and a behavioural and alcohol and drug therapist have started a support group for abused and battered women who are often depressed and prone to various diseases.

The support group is aimed at bringing the women together so that they can exchange thoughts and experiences. It is important the women should realise that they are not alone with their problems. The group breaks their isolation and loneliness and provides them with the strength to make new social contacts, thus increasing the members confidence and self-esteem.

RIFFI led the campaign to ban female genital mutilation in Sweden, which resulted in a law in 1982.

* Issued without formal editing.

At home, RIFFI is a member of the following organisations:

The Swedish Women's Lobby; Save the Children; The Inter African Committee; CSAN- Women against Alcohol and Drugs.

RIFFI co-operates with Operation 1325 in connection to Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). In 1998 RIFFI has been granted consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.